

Malpais

A jousting dance of dystopia

Dystopia

Invasion from out of space, gigantic waves of tsunami size and a monster raging the streets of Manhattan leaving screaming people and burning houses behind. The list of future dystopian disaster films from Hollywood is long. More nuanced works we find in *Children of Men*, *Brave new world* or the classic *1984*. What all of them have in common is that each of them reassembles the time they are written – just imagined in the future and with the worst possible result of what was stirring at the time it was written.

Each era has its own future dystopia: a magnifying glass of its times mutual fears and neurosis's. In the real future, they become thought provoking and sometimes comical manifests of a time long gone.



Malpais

Malpais is a satirical "dance docudrama" - a traveling concept that collects and frames the fears and dystopian stories from different countries.

The concept is to portrait the geographical manifestation of fear. A search to understand the anatomy of fear in society as well as for the individual in different cultures.

In the words of the Danish writer and priest Johannes H Christensen:

"We have always tried to avoid the disaster by anticipating it"

According to this view Dystopias has a socially healing function. From the apocalypse as it exists in numerous religions to a film industry mass-producing disaster-films. We recognize fear. It is one of our basic instincts and we know when to defend your selves or run to save our lives. This is something we share with most living creatures. But to anticipate fear is something only we humans seem to conduct. Fear that can be taught and used manipulative. Machiavelli (Florentine philosopher and one of the main founders of modern political science) is widely known for his acceptance of using fear as a mean of controlling and

maintaining power. Maybe he actually wrote the first handbook for spin-doctors?

Either way it seems fear is an important factor. And recoil has decided to take a closer look.

The project is launched with the first "Malpais" premier in Copenhagen, on March 26th 2011. It is a performance with dance and video scenography, varying from rough documentation footage to sophisticated motion sensitive graphics in which the dancers navigate. Through this we aim to create a portrait of a small country up north, inhabited by the little mermaid and other fairy tales.

To make this portrait as accurate as possible recoil and a team of Danish artist will make a road trip around Denmark, to collect video material, interviews, audio and photographic material, in an attempt to understand what is the most frightening prospect for the country....according to the Danes. This material will be gathered and form the information platform on which we will build the performance in Copenhagen in March 2011.

Following the Copenhagen premier the concept will be re-staged with local artists in Jordan to see what fears are stirring under the surface there. Here we will follow the same procedure, but now it is with and about people in Jordan. Therefore a team of local artist we will start the process of collecting the relevant video material, interviews, audio and photographic material from the region. We hope to engage as many institutes and individuals as possible in the process. Finally we invite the audience to a performance with music, video art, and performers in close encounter with contemporary Jordan.

In the process in both Jordan and Denmark, we will make very thorough video documentation. The documented performances will be collected in a video installation we call "DystoPIX" - a concept that recoil will present in connection with the Metropolis Laboratory in Copenhagen 2012. This installation will feature the different interpretations of "Malpais" we have managed to establish – creating an alternative, dystopian map of the world today. (See letter of invitation from K.I.T. by Trevor Davis)

Recoil Performance Group has over a number of years created performances that explore the digital media as a central actor in our performances. By now the group counts the most experienced and competent artists within this field. Last year our performance FROST won a Reumert Award for best dance performance of the year. In Malpais we gather years of experience in a piece that in our view is highly relevant. We aim to challenge our own aesthetic and take the next steps in our development as an artist group. We very much look forward to this process in collaboration with artist in Denmark and Jordan.

With best regards

Tina Tarpgaard, Choreographer

